




Original document

Intelligent network interface device and system for accelerating communication

Patent number: AU1533399
 Publication date: 2000-03-21
 Inventor: BOUCHER LAURENCE B; BLIGHTMAN STEPHEN E J; CRAFT PETER K; HIGGEN DAVID A; PHILBRICK CLIVE M; STARR DARYL
 Applicant: ALACRITECH CORP;; LAURENCE B BOUCHER;; STEPHEN E J BLIGHTMAN;; PETER K CRAFT;; DAVID A HIGGEN;; CLIVE M PHILBRICK;; DARYL STARR

Also published as:

 WO0013091 (A)
 EP1116118 (A1)
 CA2341211 (A1)

Classification:

- international: G06F13/00

- european:

Application number: AU19990015333D 19981120

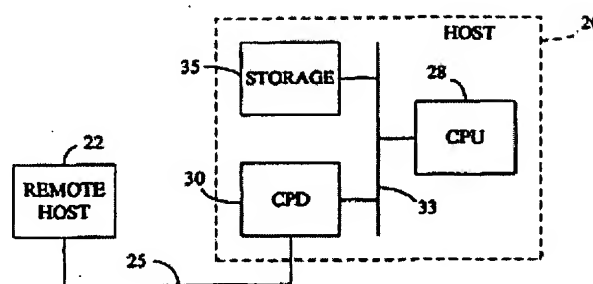
Priority number(s): US19980141713 19980828; WO1998US24943 19981120

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Abstract not available for AU1533399

Abstract of corresponding document: **WO0013091**

An intelligent network interface card or communication processing device (30) works with a host computer (20) for data communication. The device provides a fast-path (159) that avoids protocol processing for most messages, greatly accelerating data transfer and offloading time-intensive processing tasks from the host CPU (28). The host retains a fallback processing capability for messages that do not fit fast-path criteria, with the device providing assistance such as validation even for slow-path messages, and messages being selected for either fast-path or slow-path (158) processing. A context (50) for a connection is defined that allows the device to move data, free of headers, directly to or from a destination or source in the host. The context can be passed back to the host for message processing by the host. The device contains specialized hardware circuits that are much faster at their specific tasks than a general purpose CPU. A preferred embodiment includes a trio of pipelined processors (482, 484, 486) devoted to



receive, transmit and utility processing, providing full duplex communication for four Fast Ethernet nodes.

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